

## LEARN TO USE CHOPSTICKS

**Theme:** Japanese Food

**Activity Objectives:**

Through engagement in this activity, students will:

- Briefly learn the background of the use of chopsticks in Japan
- Learn the mechanics of using chopsticks
- Practice using chopsticks, thus honing their fine motor skills

**Procedures:**

General introduction: Ask students if they've ever used chopsticks to eat before. Talk about the use of chopsticks in Japan. (See Note below and etiquette Info page for reference.)

1. How to use chopsticks: show how to hold chopsticks.
2. Once the students feel comfortable with the mechanics, have them practice picking up some of the (fake) food items.
3. For those interested in learning about the foods that people use chopsticks for, talk more about the Japanese foods and what types of foods that people eat in Japan.

**Notes:**

- On appropriate cultural behavior: Chopsticks are not to be used for anything other than picking up food items. Discourage students from using them to point, poke, or stick in hair.
- People in Japan do not use chopsticks exclusively. Everyone learns how to use western cutlery (fork, spoon, knife) when young, and some foods are finger foods. For example, chopsticks are used for traditional Japanese (or Chinese) meals; fork, knife, spoon are used for more "western" style meals such as steak or spaghetti; and hamburgers or rice balls are eaten with hands.
- Various cultures in East Asian and South East Asia use chopsticks. However, each culture uses a slightly different type of chopsticks. For example, Japanese chopsticks are different from Chinese chopsticks. Chinese chopsticks are usually longer and oftentimes rounder.

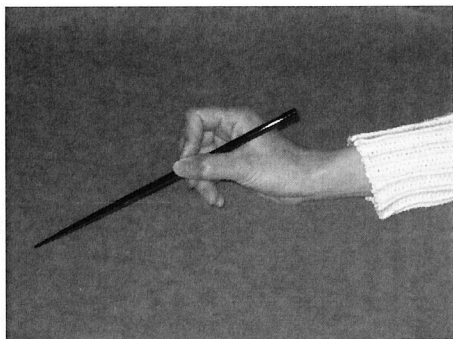
### CHOPSTICK ETIQUETTE

- Hold the chopsticks at the upper third of the wood (where it's thickest), not in the lower bottoms by the tips.
- When you are not using your chopsticks and when you are finished eating, lay them down in front of you with the tips to the left. (In formal settings, there is a chopstick rest, which is where the tips are placed.)
- Do not spear food with chopsticks.
- Do not point your chopsticks to something or someone.
- Do not wave your chopsticks in the air above the dishes while deciding what to pick up.
- Do not move plates or bowls around with chopsticks.
- It's considered unlucky to hand food between people from one pair of chopsticks directly to another. Rather, the food should be placed on some surface between the two.
- One should never stick their chopsticks vertically in a bowl of rice. This is the way to offer rice to the spirit of the dead.

## How to Hold Chopsticks

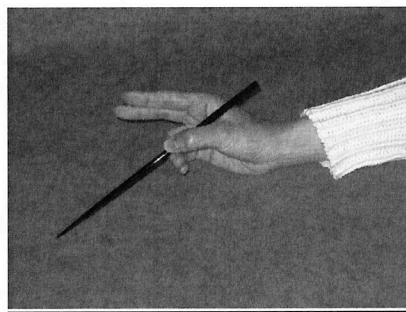
### **Step 1**

Take one chopstick and hold it in your hand like a pencil. Hold it about 2/3 of the way up, at the thicker end of the stick.



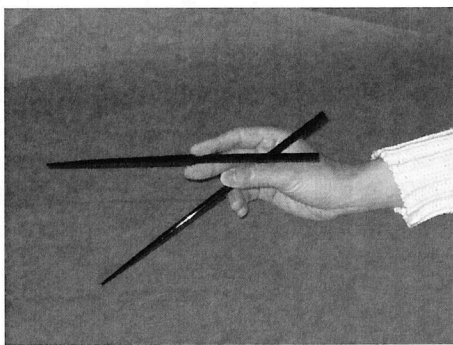
### **Step 2**

Rest the stick between your thumb (on the top of the stick) and your fourth finger (underneath the stick), so that your index and middle fingers are free.



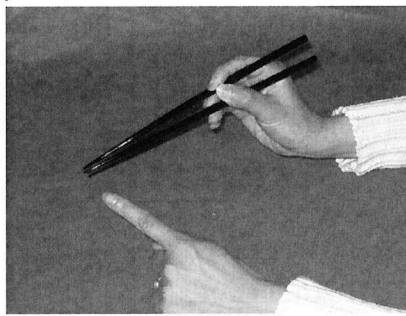
### **Step 3**

Place the second chopstick on top of the thumb, and between the index and middle fingers.



### **Step 4**

Then move the tip of the thumb to the second (top) chopstick, and pinch the top chopstick between your thumb tip and index and middle fingers. Push the front tips of the chopsticks together.



### **Step 5**

Practice moving the top chopstick with first two fingers and thumb tip. The bottom stick should remain totally still. Practice the movement, and then try picking things up!

